

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

CIEP-03 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-03 INR-11 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 PM-07 EUR-25

DRC-01 IO-14 SSC-01 NIC-01 SAM-01 FEA-02 SCCT-02 /223 W

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R 230705Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3248

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4130

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET, IR, US, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA

REF: STATE 156076

1. SUMMARY. ISRAELI MFA VIEWS ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL SITUATION IN WAKE OF FEBRUARY MILITARY UPRISING AS EXTREMELY FLUID. ARMY ACTING THROUGH NOMINALLY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO INITIATE REFORMS BUT SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BLOCK IMPLEMENTATION ETHIOPIA IS SEEKING INCREASED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM US, FRANCE AND IRAN. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF JULY 21 DISCUSSED SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA WITH SIDES (MFA, AFRICAN DIVISION) IN GENERAL TERMS AS PER DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION (REFTEL). MUCH OF FOLLOWING ANALYSIS MAY ALREADY BE WELL KNOWN TO DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY TEHRAN, BUT IS SUBMITTED AS SUMMARY OF GOI EVALUATION OF SITUATION.

3. ACCORDING TO SIDES, ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL SCENE SINCE FEBRUARY 1974 MILITARY UPRISING REMAINS EXTREMELY FLUID.

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FOUR MAN ARMY COORDINATION COMMITTEE, WITH ROTATING

REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL BRANCHES OF ARMY, IS IN EFFECT CONTROLLING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF IEG WHICH REMAINS NOMINALLY CIVILIAN. COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICERS WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT WELLKNOWN, AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHO IF ANYONE IS ACTUALLY DETERMINING ARMY POLICY. ENTIRE ARISTOCRACY, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IS IN JAIL. ETHIOPIA IS EVOLVING TOWARDS SOME TYPE OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY WITH EMPEROR REDUCED TO FIGUREHEAD STATUS, BUT WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL BE MILITARY, JOINT CIVILIAN-MILITARY OR CIVILIAN REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

4. OSTENSIBLE GOAL OF MILITARY IS TO INITIATE LONG OVERDUE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. BUT OVERWHELMING PROBLEMS OF FAMINE AND INFLATION, AS WELL AS UNSETTLED POLITICIAL SITUATION, SEVERELY LIMIT CHANCES FOR MEANINGFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM PROGRAM.

5. ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY IS CURRENTLY DOMINATED BY EFFORTS TO SEEK INCREASED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM US, FRANCE AND OTHER COUNTRIES TO ENABLE IEG TO WITHSTAND THREAT FROM SOMALI-SOVIET-ARAB FRONT. ETHIOPIA IS UNHAPPY WITH US UNWILLINGNESS TO MEET ITS AID REQUIREMENTS, AND IS BEING FORCED TO TURN TO OTHER POSSIBLE RESOURCES. SOMALIA HAS NOT YET LAUNCHED FRONTAL ATTACK AGAINST ETHIOPIA, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INCIDENTS ALONG BORDER, INCLUDIG RECENT ATTACK ON NEW OIL INSTALLATIONS AT DOLO. ACCORDING TO KENYAN PRESS, SOMALIA HAS RECENTLY ACQUIRED SOVIET MIG 21S ADDING TO ITS ALREADY CONSIDERABLE STOCKPILE OF SOVIET AIRPLANES AND WEAPONS. GOI VIEWS SOMALIA AIR FORCE AS CONTROLLING MILITARY ELEMENT IN AREA. ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF), SUPPORTED BY LIBYA, SYRIA AND NORTH YEMEN ALSO CONSTITUTES THREAT TO ETHIOPIA. ELF RECENTLY KIDNAPPED FIVE US OILFIELD WORKERS. ETHIOPIA, TOGETHER WITH KENYA AND DJIBOUTI, HAVE COMMON INTEREST IN TRYING TO PREVENT SOMALI OR ELF INCURSIONS.

6. AS REGARDS ETHIOPIAN-IRANIAN CONTACTS, (EMBOFF RAISED ISSUE DISCREETLY IN CONTEXT OF QUESTIONS RE WHICH COUNTRIES MAY BE ASSISTING ETHIOPIA), SIDES SAID THAT GOI HAD LITTLE DETAILED INFORMATION. IEG FOREIGN MINISTER DELIVERED LETTER TO SHAH FROM EMPEROR LAST WEEK, BUT CONTENTS UNKNOWN
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TO GOI. GOI ASSUMED THAT, GIVEN GROWING STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF AREA, PARTICULARLY AFTER RE-OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL, SHAH WOULD BE PREPARED TO EXTEND MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA.

7. SIDES INFORMED US THAT FRANCE AND ETHIOPIA HAD SIGNED AN AGREEMENT FOR A \$2-1/2 MILLION PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PAVED HIGHWAY FROM ADDIS ABABA TO DJIBOUTI, PROJECT IS TO

BE COMPLETED IN A YEAR.

8. AS REGARDS POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, MFA BELIEVES THAT CURRENT IEG POLITICAL SITUATION IS SO CHAOTIC AND UNCERTAIN THAT ISSUE IS NOT EVEN UNDER CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, ETHIOPIA COULD EASILY BE IN SECOND WAVE OF COUNTRIES TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL SHOULD OTHER AFRICAN STATES TAKE THE LEAD. DESPITE BREAK OF RELATIONS, ISRAELI-ETHIOPIAN COMMERICAL RELATIONS HAVE CONTINUED, INVOLVING PRESENCE OF ISRAELI BUSINESSMEN IN ADDIS ABABA.

9. WE HAVE NOT MARKED ADDIS ABABA FOR INFO COPY SINCE DEPARTMENT REFTEL HAD NOT DONE SO. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS THIS REPORT TO ADDIS ABABA.
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